

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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TAGS: PFOR, PORG, IN, BD, UR, US, UK, PK

SUBJECT: CHAVAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE

SUMMARY. IN AN OCTOBER 17 PRESS CONFERENCE UPON HIS RETURN FROM THE UNGA, MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Y.B. CHAVAN HAD THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL COMMENTS:

(A) MOST NATIONS ATTENDING UNGA, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN AND SOME ARAB NATIONS, BELIEVE THAT FARAKKA BARRAGE IS A BILATERAL ISSUE BEST SOLVED THROUGH DIRECT DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH; (B) DR. KISSINGER HAD REITERATED TO CHAVAN THAT UNITED STATES WAS PRACTISING RESTRAINT IN ITS ARMS SALE TO PAKISTAN; (C) THE SOVIET UNION FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE UN HAD DECLARED THAT IT HAD NO MILITARY BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND HAD NO INTENTION OF HAVING SUCH BASES; (D) BECAUSE OF THE RECENT SPEECHES OF PM BHUTTO, THE GOI HAD EXPECTED THE PAKISTANIS TO RAISE KASHMIR; AND (E) AMERICANS

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WERE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION IN INDIA AND HAD ADMITTED

THAT THE RESULTS OF THE EMERGENCY IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD WERE IMPRESSIVE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DELHI NEWSPAPERS ALL FEATURED CHAVAN'S REMARKS ON FARAKKA. ALTHOUGH "NATURALLY INDIA WAS CONCERNED" ABOUT THE INSCRIPTION OF THE FARAKKA QUESTION, CHAVAN SAID, IT WAS A "NORMAL COURTESY" FOR UNGA TO LIST ANY QUESTION BROUGHT UP BY A MEMBER. ASKED WHETHER ANY COUNTRY WAS BACKING THE INTERNATIONALIZING OF THE ISSUE, CHAVAN SAID THAT THE VIEWS OF PARTICULAR COUNTRIES ON THE SUBJECT WOULD BECOME KNOWN WHEN THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE HELD DISCUSSIONS, PROBABLY IN MID-NOVEMBER. ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED WIRE SERVICE "SAMACHAR", CHAVAN SAID THAT "EVEN THE BIG POWERS LIKE THE USA AND BRITAIN CONSIDER IT AS A BILATERAL MATTER AND SO (SIC) WAS THE VIEW OF THE U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE, DR. HENRY KISSINGER, WITH WHOM I HAD A SEPARATE MEETING." (ACCORDING TO AN EARLIER SAMACHAR ACCOUNT, FOLLOWING HIS MEETINGS WITH PM CALLAGHAN AND FOREIGN SECRETARY CROSLAND IN LONDON OCTOBER 15, CHAVAN SAID THAT BRITAIN CONSIDERS FARAKKA A BILATERAL MATTER IN WHICH IT WOULD NOT LIKE TO GET INVOLVED.) ACCORDING TO THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" ACCOUNT OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE, CHAVN ALSO SAID THAT DURING HIS INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH SOME 30 LEADERS OF DIFFERENT DELEGATIONS THEY AGREED THAT BY "INTERNATIONALIZING" FARAKKA AS BANGLADESH HAD DONE, ITS SOLUTION WOULD ULTIMATELY BE DELAYED. THE "TIMES OF INDIA" ADDED THAT CHAVAN HAD SAID THAT THE BANGLADESHIS IN THEIR PRIVATE TALKS WITH OTHER DELEGATIONS HAD ALLEGED THAT INDIA WAS AIDING BANGLADESHI INSURGENTS, BUT SINCE THE ALLEGATIONS WERE NOT MADE PUBLICLY, THE QUESTION OF REFUTING THE CHARGES DID NOT ARISE.

2. DISCUSSING HIS MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE, CHAVAN SAID THAT "WE DID NOT EMPHASIZE THE AREAS OF DIFFERENCES BUT THE AREAS WHERE WE CAN COOPERATE." CHAVAN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT A GOOD BEGINNING HAD BEEN MADE BY SOME SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE INDO-US JOINT COMMISSION AND THAT SUSTAINED INTEREST WAS NOW REQUIRED TO IDENTIFY NEW AREAS OF COOPERATION. CHAVAN SAID THAT HE HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER "SPECULATION" THAT THE US MIGHT SUPPLY SOPHISTICATED ARMS TO PAKISTAN. THE SECRETARY, CHAVAN SAID, HAD REITERATED THAT THE US WOULD NOT ENCOURAGE AN ARMS RACE IN THE SUBCONTINENT AND WAS EXERCISING RESTRAINT IN UNCLASSIFIED

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ITS ARMS SUPPLIES TO PAKISTAN. CHAVAN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THERE WERE INDICATIONS THE RESTRAINT INCLUDED BOTH QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE SUPPLY OF ARMS TO PAKISTAN.

3. IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET FONMIN GROMYKO, CHAVAN SAID, HE HAD DISCUSSED VARIOUS MATTERS INCLUDING THE SOVIET INITIATIVES AT THE UN FOR ESTABLISHING "DURABLE PEACE" IN THE WORLD AND HAD ASKED FOR GROMYKO'S IMPRESSIONS ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN CHINA.

CHAVAN SAID THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE UN THE SOVIET UNION HAD DECLARED THAT IT HAD NO MILITARY BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THAT IT HAD NO INTENTION OF HAVING ANY BASES IN THE AREA. ACCORDING TO THE "TIMESOF INDIA", CHAVAN, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION SAID THAT HE HAD INVITED GROMYKO SOME TIME AGO TO VISIT INDIA BUT NO DATES HAD BEEN FIXED FOR THE VISIT. (SEE DELHI 15222)

4. ASKED ABOUT PAKISTAN'S RAISING OF THE KASHMIR QUESTION, CHAVAN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT PERHAPS PAKISTAN WANTED TO KEEP THE QUESTION ALIVE INTERNATIONALLY. "WE WERE EXPECTING THIS", HE SAID, BECAUSE PM BHUTTO HAD BEEN MAKING REFERENCES TO KASHMIR IN RECENT SPEECHES. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, CHAVAN ADDED, BHUTTO WAS ALSO MENTIONING THE SIMLA PACT.

5. QUESTIONED ABOUT US REACTION TO EVENTS IN INDIA, CHAVAN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE AMERICANS WERE NOW TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION. THE AMERICANS, HE SAID, "ALSO ADMITTED THAT RESULTS OF THE EMERGENCY WERE CERTAINLY IMPRESSIVE IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD." AS FOR THE INDIAN AUDIENCES TO WHOM HE SPOKE IN AMERICA, CHAVAN SAID THAT HE TRIED TO PUT ACROSS THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE EMERGENCY AND MANY INDIANS APPRECIATED THE EFFECTS OF THE IMPOSITION OF THE EMERGENCY IN THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FIELDS. ACCORDING TO SOME PRESS ACCOUNTS, CHAVAN ADDED THAT IN EVERY GROUP, HOWEVER, HE HAD FOUND A COUPLE OF PEOPLE WHO ASKED QUESTIONS "IN AN AGGRESSIVE WAY."SAXBE

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